

HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL – 57th SESSION

Interactive Dialogue on the report of the Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar

9 September 2024

Mr. Nicholas Koumjian, Head of the Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar (IIMM), presented the sixth annual report, highlighting the increasingly frequent and brutal war crimes and crimes against humanity committed by various parties in Myanmar’s ongoing conflicts. He emphasized that **civilians are often direct targets**, with examples of aerial attacks by the Myanmar military bombarding a wedding party and monasteries in Sagaing region; a displaced persons’ camp in Kachin State; and schools in Kayah, Kayin and Chin States. Mr. Koumjian reported horrific testimonies of torture and sexual violence against detainees, including beatings, electric shocks, and gang rapes. The Mechanism is investigating killings, rapes, and village burnings in Rakhine State, where the Rohingya continue to face particular vulnerability. He stressed that the **ongoing violence is the result of decades of impunity** and outlined efforts to share evidence with international courts, including the International Criminal Court (ICC) and the International Court of Justice (ICJ). Despite challenges in accessing information from Myanmar, the IIMM has collected over a million pieces of evidence, utilizing advanced technology to authenticate and secure data. He praised civil society organizations risking their lives to provide information and called on States, particularly those in the region, to support efforts to end the ongoing violence and impunity in Myanmar. Overall, States can support the Mechanism by facilitating direct contact with witnesses and ensure their safety and security, which requires close cooperation and collaboration with the IIMM. This includes allowing the Mechanism to operate within their territories, granting necessary permissions, and providing access to those who have testimony or evidence to share. Additionally, States can continue backing the implementation of ASEAN’s five-points consensus, particularly its first point, which calls for an end to violence in Myanmar. These efforts collectively strengthen the Mechanism’s ability to gather evidence and hold perpetrators accountable.

Interactive dialogue

31 country delegations took the floor during the interactive dialogue. **The majority of States** expressed deep concern over the escalating violence and atrocities in Myanmar, particularly targeting civilians, and reiterated strong support for the IIMM. **They also highlighted the importance of accountability**, condemning war crimes, crimes against humanity, and the use of sexual violence as a weapon of terror. There was also **widespread concern about the Rohingya’s plight**, with many countries urging the international community and regional actors to play a greater role in resolving the crisis, protecting them, including by recognizing their right to citizenship and dignified return. The need for cooperation from Myanmar and other regional States to ensure safety, and meaningful dialogue was frequently stressed.

The **EU, Ireland, Switzerland** and the **US**, *inter alia*, stressed the importance of the Mechanism in documenting crimes and ensuring justice, and reiterated their commitment to accountability and international justice. Similarly, some other countries, including **Luxembourg, France, Belgium**, and **Pakistan**, focused on the need to cooperate with international legal bodies to ensure justice. In this regard, they urged collaboration with international and national courts, such as the ICC, the ICJ, and the Argentina’s Federal Criminal Court to ensure that perpetrators are held accountable.

Kuwait, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and **Bangladesh** expressed concern about the Rohingya’s safety, underlining the need for regional and international efforts to ensure their protection, accountability for crimes against them, and their right to citizenship and safe return.

Australia and **Indonesia** strongly condemned the use of sexual violence as a tactic of war used to spread fear and terror in the civil population.

Japan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, and Bulgaria emphasized the importance of ASEAN's role, including through its five-point consensus as a reference for resolving the crisis.

Belarus, China, and Venezuela highlighted the importance of respecting Myanmar's sovereignty and called for non-interference in its internal affairs. Belarus was critical of the resources devoted to the IIMM, while China and Venezuela emphasized political dialogue as the key to resolving the crisis.

NGOs underscored the urgent need for intensified international support for the IIMM, given the alarming escalation of human rights violations in Myanmar. The **Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development** emphasized the rapid increase in serious international crimes and the necessity for all stakeholders to bolster their efforts in supporting the Mechanism. **Christian Solidarity Worldwide** highlighted the plight of ethnic and religious minorities and demanded the unconditional release of political prisoners. **Lawyers Rights Watch Canada** stressed the need for greater international protection for over 20,000 arbitrarily detained individuals and human rights defenders.

Delegations that took the floor during the Interactive dialogue (31 country delegations):

European Union, Pakistan (on behalf of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation), Denmark (on behalf of the Nordic Baltic countries), Liechtenstein, Kuwait, Canada, Germany, Indonesia, Luxembourg, Malta, Switzerland, Ireland, Japan, Malawi, Australia, France, Egypt, Belgium, United States of America, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Albania, Bulgaria, Saudi Arabia, Belarus, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Bangladesh, Malaysia, Venezuela, China, Türkiye, Gambia.

NGOs that took the floor during the Interactive dialogue (7):

International Commission of Jurists, Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development, Centre pour les Droits Civils et Politiques, Christian Solidarity Worldwide, Lawyers' Rights Watch Canada, International Organization for the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, Arab-European Center of Human Rights and International Law.

To watch the full meeting refer to the [UN WEB TV](#).